OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER, OPPOSITION LEADER, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH

6th August 2018

Dear Prime Minister, Mr Corbyn, Foreign Secretary Hunt and Secretary of State Hancock,

We, the undersigned believe Real Bodies: The Exhibition showing at Birmingham’s NEC should be shut down immediately and thoroughly investigated for the following reasons:

1. The exhibition presenters, Imagine Exhibitions have confirmed that the display, consisting of 20 whole human cadavers and over 200 human organs, human foetuses and body parts, are sourced from China and are presented without any consent documents and identification papers to confirm the origins of the deceased. The CEO of Imagine admitted there is ‘no documentation’ to prove their identities or that they agreed to donate their bodies after death1.

2. The non-consensual display of human remains is in violation of the Human Tissue Act (2004), as well as the spirit in which it was created. The Human Tissue Authority’s Guidance for Professionals states that ‘Removing, storing or using human tissue for Scheduled Purposes without appropriate consent’ is an offence under the Human Tissue Act (2004)2. Schedule 1 of the Act also clearly states that the ‘Purposes Requiring Consent’ includes both ‘displays’ (Sch. 1 para. 5), and ‘Education or training relating to human health’ (Sch. 1 para. 9)3

Commercial operations that Import human remains should also be required to abide by these standards to ensure that trafficked human bodies are not permitted to enter, and be displayed, in the UK.

3. Using human organs and tissues without consent for financial profit is the antithesis of ethical and legal practice as set out in the Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplantation and the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs.

4. The public display of the deceased, including foetuses of varying gestation times, without confirmed consent is a gross violation of human rights, dignity and ethics, which should not be permitted on the grounds of ‘art’ or ‘education.’

5. The bodies and organs reportedly come from Dalian, China and were sourced from the Dalian Public Security Bureau/Police, according to the CEO of Imagine Exhibitions4.

6. This trade in human bodies is not only facilitated by the Chinese Communist regime’s extensive use of the death penalty but also by the incarceration of other ‘unwanted’ prisoners in Chinese detention facilities.

7. Investigative reports5 have concluded that bodies sourced from Dalian and used in plastination exhibits include prisoners of conscience detained in the vast prison/ labour camp compounds within close proximity to the Dalian plastination facility. The prisoners of conscience are primarily, but not only, practitioners of the spiritually based set of exercises, Falun Gong. Dalian is an epicentre of organ transplant activity, plastination and repression of Falun Gong6

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3 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/schedule/1
4 http://archive.li/BpWIJ
5 https://www.weeklystandard.com/ethan-gutmann/bodies-at-an-exhibition
6 https://www.upholdjustice.org/node/236
https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-29725567.html
8. Plastinated body exhibitions from China *have been banned* in a growing number of places around the world, including in Israel, France, Hawaii and various cities in the US. The Czech Republic changed its laws on 7th July 2017, meaning such an exhibition would no longer be allowed to enter its country without written consent from the deceased.

9. Commercial profit should not outweigh the gross violation of basic human dignity present in this exhibition.

We believe that this exhibition encroaches on our UK values and law and should be stopped. DNA tests should also be carried out so the family identifications can be made in the future. We also urge the Government to ensure that appropriate legislations are in place so that such exhibits cannot be freely imported into the UK.

Yours sincerely,

Victoria Ledwidge  
Actor, Presenter, Human Rights Campaigner, Communications Coordinator for the Bodies Exhibit Campaign, International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC)  
missledwidge@hotmail.co.uk

Susie Hughes  
Executive Director and Co-founder, International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC)  
endtransplantabuse.org

Fiona Bruce MP  
Member of Parliament for Congleton, Chair of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

Ben Rogers  
Co-founder and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, Founder of Hong Kong Watch, Human rights activist, Journalist and Author  
hongkongwatch.org

The Rt Hon Lord Alton of Liverpool, KCSG KCMCO  
Co-founder of Jubilee Action, Former MP, Author

The Rt Hon Lord Swinfen  
Founder and Director of The Swinfen Charitable Trust

The Rt Hon Lord Lytton

Tom Brake MP  
Member of Parliament for Carshalton and Wallington

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7 https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/160245  
9 http://lrbhawaii.org/legis09/passed09.pdf  
12 https://www.weeklystandard.com/ethan-gutmann/bodies-at-an-exhibition
Chris Stephens MSP
Member of Parliament for Glasgow South West

David Matas
International Human Rights Lawyer, Author, Noble Peace Prize Nominee
Co-founder, International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC)

Ethan Gutmann
Investigative Journalist, Author and Noble Peace Prize Nominee
Co-founder of the International Coalition To End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC)
ethan-gutmann.com

Hon. David Kilgour, J.D., Ottawa
Author, Former Canadian Cabinet Minister, Noble Peace Price Nominee
Co-founder of the International Coalition To End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC)

Prof Heather Draper
Chair of Bioethics, Health Sciences, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick Member, International Advisory Committee Member, International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse In China (ETAC)

Dr Adnan Sharif
Consultant Nephrologist and Secretary of Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH)
dafoh.org

Dr David Nicholl
Consultant Neurologist & Human Rights Activist, Birmingham

Dr Enver Tohti
Former Chinese Surgeon

Dr William Liu
Chairman, Falun Dafa Association (UK)

Dr June Jones
Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Ethics, Head of the University of Birmingham Unit of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics

Prof. Jonathan Reinarz
Director of Social Studies in Medicine and Director of Education for the Institute of Applied Health Research, Professor in the History of Medicine

Dr Niall McCrae
Senior Lecturer in Mental Health at King’s College London, Author, Writer for Salisbury Review

Dr Lila Kossyvaki
Lecturer in Severe Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Birmingham University

Dr Dermot Williamson
Free-lance University Lecturer

Dr Nicola Gauld
Sacha Stone
Founder and Trustee of Emeritus – International Tribunal for Natural Justice
commission.itnj.org

Rebecca James
Co-Founder of Bristol Against Forced Organ Harvesting, Human Rights Activist

Robert Healey
Co-founder of Bristol Against Forced Organ Harvesting

Masha Savitz
Human Rights Documentary Director and Producer, Author

Cllr Tom Aditya for Bradley Stoke
Vice Chairman of Bristol Multi Faith Forum, Vice Chairman of Police Advisory Panel & Avon & Somerset Police Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Jude English
Green Party Bristol

Margaret Okole
Birmingham Green Party Elections Officer

Chrysa Trygousi
Senior Civil Engineer

Councillor Julien Pritchard
Green Party Councillor - Druids Heath & Monyhull

Councillor Ruth Pickersgill MBE
Labour Councillor for Bristol, Easton Ward

Anne Peacey
on behalf of the National Justice and Peace Network

Katharine Thane
Operations Director All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief

Amro Hussain
Parliamentary Officer All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief

Martin Lovatt Wolverhampton
East CLP Activist

Elizabeth Mellor
Lay Minister, Church of England, Bristol

CC
Allan Marriott-Smith
Chief Executive
Human Tissue Authority